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## Mascianica, Francis oral history interview

Greg Beam

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## **Interview with Francis Mascianica by Greg Beam**

### *Summary Sheet and Transcript*

#### **Interviewee**

Mascianica, Francis

#### **Interviewer**

Beam, Greg

#### **Date**

August 14, 2000

#### **Place**

Saugus, Massachusetts

#### **ID Number**

MOH 227

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#### **Biographical Note**

Francis Mascianica was born in 1918 and grew up in Massachusetts, graduating from Everett High School as a track star in 1936. He attended Northeastern University and worked his way through with a job at the Buck Printing Company. Francis then went to the U.S. Naval Academy where he met Ed Muskie and they graduated on January 5, 1943. They both ended up going to Penn State taking the same train and diesel engineering course to prepare for serving on a destroyer. They were roommates at the Nittany Lion Inn. After that, they went off separately to fight in the war. Later, Mascianica worked on research and development for the Watertown National Laboratories in Watertown, Massachusetts.

#### **Scope and Content Note**

Interview includes discussions of: Lewiston, Maine trolley cars; Polish ancestry; night-time train ride with Ed Muskie in January 1943 to Penn State; Nittany Lion Inn; World War II memorabilia; Ed Muskie; life during the War; the draft and the U.S. Naval Academy; Governor Muskie; William Loeb; economic conditions of the 1940s; 1938 track meet at Bates College; Jane Muskie; and Muskie's law practice.

## **Indexed Names**

Adams, Arnold  
Lincoln, Abraham, 1809-1865  
Loeb, William  
Mascianica, Francis  
Muskie, Edmund S., 1914-1996  
Muskie, Jane Gray  
Muskie, Stephen  
Shroeder, Ted

## **Transcript**

**GB:** . . . oral history interview conducted by Greg Beam with Francis Mascianica at his home in Saugus, Massachusetts on August 14th, 2000 beginning at approximately 11:00 A.M. (*this piece of audio appears at the very end of the interview, but is most useful placed here*)

**Francis Mascianica:** And I remember in the square they had trolley cars. I don't know if they still have trolley cars there or not, you know, the elevator cars or the trolley cars-

**Greg Beam:** Wait, in Lewiston?

**FM:** In Lewiston, yeah.

**GB:** Oh really, no, they don't have those any more.

**FM:** Auburn, there was just a bridge I remember. I think at the bridge was Lewiston and the other half was Auburn, I think, if I'm right.

**GB:** Yeah, that's right.

**FM:** I'm going back many, many years ago.

**GB:** That's right.

**FM:** I'm going back in the late thirties or so, and I remember we stayed at a hotel just beyond the bridge. I don't know if the old hotel is there. Then we went to Bates College and I guess, I remember they had a dirt track, a dirt track, and I'm going back in 1938, '9, and '40, in around there so it's many moons ago. There's a lot of changes I'm sure since then probably.

**GB:** What was the name of the hotel you stayed at, do you remember that? Because I don't think it's there any more.

**FM:** It was an old hotel I remember, I don't know the name of it but it was, they had railway tracks, trolley tracks I should say. I'm saying rail, trolley tracks around the square and it made a

figure eight or whatever it is around town. And the hotel was an old hotel I remember, just off the inclination I remember, there was a little slope in the road, and I'm trying to remember the name of the hotel and I can't.

**GB:** It was right next to a bridge between Lewiston and Auburn?

**FM:** That's right, that's right, next to a bridge, up on the little incline, up on the hill I remember. And we stayed there, and we, we had track meets with Bates for three years in a row I remember. Indoor tracks meets, up there because they had the track in and had cage, cage track, dirt. And I remember that I ran the six hundred yards and I smashed the record of Arnold Adams and he was on the Olympic team in 1936 [1932], on the relay team, the U.S. relay team [track team]. Arnold Adams of Bates. I thought I'd tell you that little, that background history.

**GB:** Oh, that's good, that's good, that's great.

**FM:** And these are some of the photographs and so forth when I went to Annapolis. Yeah, this is going back in '43, and this is the Boston Garden here, and this is little old me (*unintelligible word*) here and all that stuff. But anyhow, I don't want to deter you from your notes and all that stuff.

**GB:** Oh no, this is good, this is good. We love to get stories, you know, anecdotes.

**FM:** Oh, a lot of stories. Anyhow, we, in fact I have some photographs here that, I don't know if you want to use this or not but I'd like to have it back if you're going to use any of it. Let's see if I can get it down.

**GB:** Well let me take a look at it.

**FM:** I'll get it down here, because -

**GB:** Sure.

**FM:** This is the class that went to Annapolis and we graduated together, at the U.S. Naval Academy. Get this out of your way here. But anyhow, this is at the U.S. Naval Academy here and there's Ed in here. There's Ed and little old me and so forth, and this is, you know, the class that got out 5 January 1943. Now I have the rolls here of who, who was where and they each signed their names. I think the majority of them are here.

**GB:** Oh, and there's Ed Muskie right there.

**FM:** There you go, and he's in what row?

**GB:** Eighth row. So one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, oh, he'd be way in the back somewhere. Oh he's the tall guy, oh there he is, right in the back dead center, stands right out.

**FM:** And that's act one. And then over here, and then went down to Penn State and here we

are here again.

**GB:** There he is again, the tallest guy in the crowd.

**FM:** And then we have, you know, the row numbers and all their autographs and where they're from at that time, and I think I have the majority of them.

**GB:** And you're right next to Ed Muskie.

**FM:** Well that's right, little old me and -

**GB:** So that's you and that's him.

**FM:** Yeah, we were just roommates. But anyhow, if you want to use this I'd like to have it back is what I'm saying, if you want it.

**GB:** Well, -um-

**FM:** I don't care either way is what I'm saying. I'm not going to force you into anything.

**GB:** Well what I'll have to do is I think, I think before I leave I'll give my boss a call and see if we can make arrangements to, see what she'd like to do for arrangements if we wanted to borrow it and then how we can get it back to you.

**FM:** Okay, but I thought I'd show you. He we are right in here, a little background picture? Ed, hell of a guy, and Polish descent. I'm Polish actually Muscianica, Muscionia and they say Italian, and I said oh no, I'm Polish. In the Polish language it's pronounced Mascianica. It's spelled the same, and the word '*masc*' means ointment or salve, ointment or salve. I'm giving you a little history here. Okay. Where do we start?

**GB:** Okay, well actually you just neatly segued into what my questions were going to be. I'm going to ask you a few questions to get some background on yourself so we can set up a context, you know, to get into, to get into your encounters with Ed Muskie. So let's start with your background. To begin with could you please state your full name and spell it so that we have it on the record?

**FM:** It's Francis Mascianica, Francis with an -I-, Stanley, I don't know if you want to write it out. I'll spell out the last name for you, all A's, I's and C's, Mascianica, M-A-S-C-I-A-N-I-C-A, Mascianica. And in the Polish language it's pronounced '*Mush-cha-nee-tsa*', spelled the same. And the word '*masc*' means ointment or salve, so I'm sure that, you know, the old timers were probably in the drug business or, you know, related, you know, trade and so forth and so on. But I thought I'd give you that little background history.

**GB:** Oh yeah, that's interesting.

**FM:** Mascianica in the Polish language, spelled the same, and it's Mascianica, all A's, I's, and

C's, and they look at the name and say Italian. Nope, Polish. But anyhow, a little background history.

**GB:** Well that is interesting since Ed Muskie was of course of Polish descent.

**FM:** Well yeah, this is it. Well anyhow, when we went to school there we were on the same hall I remember, Bancroft Hall. And it's, you know, just a large area of all the midshipmen there, the midshipmen and so forth that were there. And he was on the same floor as I was and we would chum around together because we were Polish descents, you know, descendants and so forth and so on, and we had a lot in common. Tall guy, hell of a guy. And he started off as a lawyer, and he went to Bates as you probably know, and you've heard the story probably a million times. And then he went to Cornell and received his law degree there, and he wasn't married, joined the forces and so forth, went to Annapolis as a midshipman.

Well, the first month was apprentice seaman, and then were, you know, midshipmen and then we graduated I think it was early January 1943. I was supposed to get on a destroyer and the old destroyer got sunk so, where the hell are they going to put me, so they told me to report to the diesel engineering school out to Penn State. Okay, so I went to South Station after my leave of about a week and a half, in fact with my girlfriend, which is my wife right now. But anyhow, we arrived at South Station here, out to Boston, and I spotted this individual and I said to the wife-to-be, I said, "Gee, he went to school with me and that's Ed Muskie," I says, "I know him." So I went up to him and I said, "Well where are you going?" He says, "I'm going to Penn State." I says, "I'm going there, too," I says. "You going to have diesel engineering course?" Yup. Okay. So we got on the Federal Express at eleven o'clock at night. And it was in the winter time, colder than hell, and we got on the train and we got out at Philadelphia at, oh, well about two-thirty in the morning, early morning. And, are you recording this here, are you?

**GB:** Yeah.

**FM:** Oh, oh, I wasn't aware of that. But anyhow, we got out at Philadelphia early in the morning. I don't know, it was about one-thirty to two-thirty A.M. and we got on another train and, to Altuna, I think, PA. And we had to stand I remember and hotter than blazes in the train and we stood up for two or three hours. Got out of there at about five-thirty in the morning, and now we're supposed to be on act three, another train into State College PA. So we got out and I'm just looking around, colder than blazes, and then I went up to an old conductor and I says, says, "How long a wait for the train to State College PA?" He says, "There it is," he says. "It'll be leaving in about four or five minutes, you might as well get on it." I says, "Where?" He says, "On the caboose." So Ed and I ran to the caboose, pot bellied stove in the middle of the caboose and we were the only live individuals there in the back I remember. And we hit every little stop along the way and we staggered into State College PA I don't know what time it was, about eleven-thirty in the morning. But anyhow, that's the background history. So we were roommates out to the Nittany Lion Inn for about four and a half months or so. I thought it would be of interest, of background history. Okay, now you can throw some questions at me and so forth and so on, or whatever you want to do.

**GB:** Sure, sure. All right, so what did your training consist of when you were at Penn State?

You were in the diesel engineering program?

**FM:** Diesel engineering program and I got the brochure right here if you're interested.

**GB:** Oh wow, yeah, yeah, absolutely.

**FM:** And it gives the background history of all individuals and all the classes and all that stuff, and I got his name and all that stuff and what class. But if you want to use this I'd like to have this back is what I'm saying because, you can reproduce it. A little background history, who went there, and this is where we lived actually. Oop, let's get this the hell out of the way. I swore.

**GB:** That's no problem.

**FM:** Anyhow, this is where we lived and so forth. Nittany Lion Inn is up on a hill I remember. And, yeah, you can use it, you can reproduce it, but I'd like to have it back.

**GB:** Oh of course, of course, of course.

**FM:** If you're interested, that's a lot of background history -

**GB:** Wouldn't think of keeping it from you.

**FM:** - and all that stuff, and we're in there.

**GB:** Look at that, yeah. Oh yeah, you've got him underlined, yourself and Muskie.

**FM:** But I thought I'd give you that information if you're interested.

**GB:** Oh yeah, definitely, definitely. Of course.

**FM:** But I'd like to have that back is what I'm saying, because I would hand out a lot of these items to individuals, like I was on the LCI-L537 and we made Omaha Beach on D-Day and all that stuff. In fact we have a write up of our year on the landing craft. And I would give these pamphlets, well they're not pamphlets, little booklets of about forty odd pages of what transpired between us, you know, being on the ship and landing on D-Day (*unintelligible word*) and Omaha Beach and all that stuff, the photographs. And I'll hand that out to some of the individuals and I'll never get the damn things back. All I have is one copy back, one, only. I had about fifteen of them but, you know, you give it out and they all have to keep it and there you are. So here I am, the old maid with one. Well anyhow, look, I'm straying off, I'm giving you (*unintelligible word*).

**GB:** Oh well, that's fine, that's fine. All right, so -

**FM:** Okay, now what are your questions?

**GB:** All right, I guess first I'd like to know what life was like for you and Ed at the, living at the Nittany Lion Inn and in training. What did a normal day consist of for the two of you in those four months?

**FM:** Well to start off with, we got out of Annapolis and I gave you the story of how we arrived there and so forth. It was just very, very cold, I remember, that morning. And anyhow, we would be up on a hill, up on the hill that overlooked the campus, beautiful area I remember. And you looked out there and you'd see the hills, Nittany Lion Hills or whatever, a very, very scenic area. But we would start the day off early in the morning with muster at eight o'clock in the morning, and we'd go to class until about twelve o'clock, to classes, plural. Had diesel engineering, lab work and so forth and so on which is explained in that book there. You know, at the beginning of it is what I'm saying, of what transpired and what type courses you had. And, in fact we had lab work and all that stuff, we went to school five and a half days I remember. On the weekend we were in school in the morning on Saturdays and the afternoon you had off. And, in fact you had homework, you know, it was school, school, school, school and that was it.

But I don't know, I'm straying off here on the life there. And I got out of there I think it was, now when the heck was it, in May, early May I think we got out of there. I was supposed to get on a destroyer and the destroyer got sunk so I went down to Florida and I was on PCs and landing craft eventually, LSTs landing craft, infantry, large and so forth and so on. They were on maneuvers in Virginia, and then we left for England. I'm talking about myself now, not Ed Muskie.

**GB:** Of course, yup, yup.

**FM:** Well I'm straying off because you know one thing leads to another and before you know it you're going here on this tangent instead of this tangent here. Well, I'm straying off. Now you can ask me your own question.

**GB:** Well go on, go on whatever tangents you want and if there's something I need to know I'll be sure to ask you, so-.

**FM:** Okay.

**GB:** All right, so, let me see, while you were, well I'll start here. Can you tell me about what Ed Muskie was like back then, personality wise?

**FM:** Personality wise a tremendous individual. He went to Bates as you probably know, then he went to Cornell and you heard this probably a million times and so forth and so on. And he was down to earth, very, very knowledgeable usually on life in general in, you know, problems at home where he lived in Waterville, Maine and Rumford and all that stuff. But he wasn't married. In fact a little older than me, he was probably about four or five years older than me, because I was born in 1918 and he was born in, I don't know what year he was born, 19-, what, '12?

**GB:** Fourteen.



**FM:** Fourteen or whatever it was, 1914, so he was a little older. And he was well-educated, well savvy, down to earth individual, knowledgeable. And, you know, when I heard he was running for the governorship of Maine I was really surprised, I said, Ed, my goodness gracious. But he was astute, you know, very astute individual, knowledgeable in a lot of areas and so forth. And in fact he had engineering but he was a lawyer but ended up as an engineer and officer in the Navy. Now what he finally got out as, I don't know if he was a deck officer finally or not. But he got out as an engineer and officer, electrical engineering and marine engineering, diesel engineering, and he had the law degrees besides. But very, very informative individual, he was likeable and so forth. I'm just straying off. Throw the questions and I'll try to answer them.

**GB:** Well, so you attended classes with him when you were in engineering school?

**FM:** That's right.

**GB:** How as he as a student and how did he handle the responsibilities of (*unintelligible phrase*)?

**FM:** No problem at all. He was astute, he was sharp, he grasped everything, and he was above average student. And he was very sociable and so forth, everybody liked Ed. Tall guy. In fact he looked like Abraham Lincoln, they would say, "Hey Abe." But he was of Polish descent. I'm Polish, you know, as I told you before, and we compared notes of home life and all that stuff and he, his father I think was a tailor in Rumford, Maine if I'm not mistaken.

**GB:** That's right, that's right.

**FM:** And, you know, you know, the life of Riley wasn't there. I mean it was a hard life because you look around today and compare just life of what it was then and today, you know. But today, well the youngsters are spoiled rotten. Years ago, you know, to find a job was hard. Lean years, war years, you had very little and, you know, the salaries, you know. You tell kids today that you went in the Navy and the first year you're appren-, the first month you're an apprentice seaman and you're making twenty one dollars a month. I hesitated there because they'll say an hour, a month. So you didn't go, did a hell of a lot at twenty-one dollars a month the first year apprentice seaman. And then as a midshipman I don't know what the heck we were getting. We were probably getting, probably in the low forty dollars a month or whatever was midshipman. But that didn't leave you a hell of a lot to go out around town and raise hell, beside doing your homework and all that stuff. Because you tell the kids today and they say an hour? No, a month. But anyhow, I'm straying off. I thought I'd tell you some of these sad stories.

**GB:** Well, did you find that there were a lot of similarities in your family background, both being of Polish descent?

**FM:** Oh yeah, well we, you know, the similarities were there because my father and my mother came over here. My mother came here when she was age eighteen or sixteen, I think she was sixteen, with her aunt, and her aunt was about nineteen. And they came over here and the first year they slept on the floor in the rooming house. And when she left home, and the mother

and father says and when you make enough money you send us the money back home of your trip back to the States. That's the way it was, it was lean, you know a lot of lean years. And she slept on the floor the first year. Well Ed had just kind of reminisced. His father was a tailor I think by trade and, but he came up the hard way and it wasn't an easy life. And I don't know if he got a scholarship to Bates or not.

**GB:** He did.

**FM:** You probably know, but I remember Bates was a hell of a nice school. I'm sure that has expanded tremendously probably since the late forties or whatever, or the late thirties I should say. But I'm straying off again and I'm going off on tangents. Okay, what else (*unintelligible phrase*)?

**GB:** No, that's fine, all that's good, I'd love to hear about all of this. Now did you share Muskie's Catholic background, are you Catholic as well?

**FM:** I'm Catholic and he was Catholic. But I remember in that era, I don't know if we went to church or not on Sundays. I don't remember that. I don't think I did, I don't think he did because it was regimentation all the way in the Navy, you know. We, we didn't have any services on the grounds that I can remember. I'm trying to remember back, and it was a little hick town at that time. Well they had one church I think and they had a, I'm looking back and what did they have in town. They didn't have a heck of a lot in town of what to do because it was kind of isolated.

And plus, you know, it was war years and the lights were turned off in the streets and all that stuff, you know, there wasn't any lights. The way it is now you go out on the street at five o'clock or whatever it is depending on the season and the lights are on and all that stuff. And there, boy, they had to conserve everything and they worried about the Germans, that probably they could see the outskirts of big cities and all that stuff and on and on and on. There was a lot of chatter like that I remember.

But he was very, very knowledgeable, he was likeable. In fact he looked like Abraham Lincoln in a lot of ways because of his tallness and so forth and so on. But anyhow, I'm straying off again, throw some questions at me.

**GB:** Well, okay, well how much free time did you fellows have when you were uh, when you were studying at Penn State, and what would you do in your free time?

**FM:** Not too much is what I'm saying, because to start off with I think he had a car. He got a car up to that area but gasoline was rationed at two or three gallons a week. I'm trying to remember, it wasn't a hell of a lot and you couldn't go a heck of a lot with two or three gallons of gas depending on your priority, if you're a defense worker, and a this and a that. If you're in school I don't think we got a hell of a lot. I didn't have a car up there anyhow, but he had his car up there. And for entertainment we'd go to the Radskill and had probably a beer at night. And at about nine-thirty or so that was the end of that between studying up to about eight o'clock to about nine-thirty or ten o'clock at night and that was it. But they were well regimented in that

area.

But I'm trying to remember what else. There was nothing to do up there because you're up in the wilds of nowhere up in State College PA here. There was nothing to do there but study. Today it's altogether different. But I remember their basketball games. There was only a handful watching their basketball games, it was the war era is what I'm saying. But, yeah that was tough, it was tough.

Tell it to the kids today and they don't want to believe you about the, you know, just how much an hour that you're making. In fact when I got out of Northeastern I was only making eighty dollars a month at GE, at General Electric, eighty dollars a month now, not a week or an hour or whatever. And you couldn't do a hell of a lot, plus, but everything was rationed, you know. You couldn't go out raising hell because liquor was rationed. If you're not married and you want to go to the nightclubs and so forth and so on, you couldn't. And if you did there was nothing to do anyhow. But I was 1A because I had my health and all that stuff. I wasn't married, so 1A means you're eligible for joining the forces and saving democracy and so forth and so on. But it was lean times. But, you know, you roll with the flow as the kids would say, you roll with the flow. I'm straying off again. Anything else? I'm giving you a lot of background history here, there's a lot of that is probably -

**GB:** Oh, that's good and I think I might ask you actually some more of that, some more of that. So how did you and others around you and Ed Muskie feel about the war, going into the war? Were you excited to be able to serve, or were you hesitant, worried, what -?

**FM:** Well in that era if you are eligible and being in 1A category you see they grabbed you on the draft, that's the phraseology they used. Yeah, you were drafted eventually, 1A, or you'd join the forces on your own and selected where you want to go and do whatever you want to do and so forth and so on. But since we had degrees, well we had options where, we were fortunate in a lot of ways. Where we had some of these areas that were available if you wanted to pursue it, like going to school up to Prairie State, if you had engineering in school. That was another engineering school that the Navy had in New York, Prairie State they called it. And the other was Annapolis, the U.S. Naval Academy. So I chose that and, because I said well, it's a little pizzazz with the name, you know, U.S. Naval Academy.

But I remember there was, you know, regimentation there all the way. You know, in fact you'd wake up in the morning at five thirty and you go out in the wide halls. There wide as from there to there, and you're out there exercising for about fifteen minutes. And then after that you go into your room, and there were four individuals per room and the room was probably this size here with two bunk beds here, one here and one there I should say. And they're in tiers and there are four individuals per room.

And you'd live by the bell, you know, the bell would ring and you'll have to run out and you'll have to muster out in the halls. Then you'd march to the mess hall, and everybody ate at once I remember. You would arrive there and the mess hall would be from here to Route 1 almost, it was a long, long mess hall, with all the midshipmen there. And if you're a slow eater, too bad because, you know, the bell would ring and you would hop in eating with the platters. You grab

the platter and start eating and then, within fifteen or twenty minutes the bell would ring and you would have to get out of that mess hall and go up to your room and make your bed and all that stuff, you know, the military style and so forth and so on. And then, you know, the bell would ring and you'd go out and you'd just muster again. And everyplace you went you marched, you know, with the, with the band, they had a little band I remember. I'm talking the U.S. Naval Academy, and they would have a band out there, dah, dah, dah, dah-dah-dah-dah-dah, and you'd march to your class.

And, you know, the classes were altogether different, you know. You would roll into class and you'd sit down and the officer in charge, which was the instructor, would say, any questions? And in fact he will answer the questions, whatever you had, and you would draw slips and man the boards. There'll be questions on the slips and you had so many minutes to go up and write the answers on the board, because if you had the question number one, you go up and you write and so forth. And after fifteen minutes or whatever the time, you have to sit down. Okay, who has slip number one, get up and recite. And you would have to read the question and answer, and if you didn't know the answer, too bad. They would rate you every class every day. But they don't do that I don't think at Bates or at Cornell or any place.

**GB:** I wouldn't suspect so.

**FM:** Every question. And that's the way it was. And you were ranked or rated every class every day on your homework and so forth and so on. And if you didn't know it there wasn't anybody up there to help you because you had to get up there and recite on your own. Okay, next. I'm straying off and I'm giving you a little background.

**GB:** Well let me ask you, how did Ed Muskie handle those little quiz sessions every day?

**FM:** No problem at all, I mean he rolled with the flow. He was one of the men, or the boys in that era, you know, you're one of the boys I would say. And he was well versed, he was sharp, but you know, he started off as a lawyer but ended up as an engineering officer, old Ed.

**GB:** All right, so after, after Penn State, after those four and a half months, what did, where did you go from there?

**FM:** Well I was supposed to get on a destroyer that got sunk.

**GB:** Was that the U.S.S. Mascomb?

**FM:** U.S.S. Mascomb, yeah.

**GB:** And, you know, that got sunk. So they shipped me down to Little Creek, Virginia. And Little Creek, Virginia was an amphibious training base, amphibious training base. And then from there on in, I was there for probably four or five weeks and then we went down to Florida in Miami and we're in the small craft school. I forgot the name of the school, but anyhow we're there for maybe four or five weeks and up we went back to Little Creek, Virginia and we were assigned on an LCI-L537. I'm trying to remember the names and the dates, so I got on that ship

and we were training at Virginia Beach for three or four months. Then we went abroad to England. Now he went, I don't know where Ed went from there on in. I don't know if he went to sub school or DE school or whatever. I mean, well after that, that tour of duty from Penn State I don't know where he went. Do you have that information?

**GB:** No, I don't on hand right now.

**FM:** That's all right, that's all right.

**GB:** Did you keep in touch with him at all?

**FM:** Keep in touch, I would write him a letter or two but in that era it was tough going. But I remember that I was working as research and development on armor at the Watertown National Laboratories here in Watertown. And I went to work one day, picked up the newspaper, Edmund S. Muskie is the new governor of Maine. And I said, gee, Ed, I says, "Boy I know Ed." So I told the individuals working there, I says, "Here's my roommate." "Oh, come on, Frank," they says, said to me. I said, "Look, I'll write a letter congratulating him on that and kind of just reminisce of the story from here to South Station there and on the caboose and all that stuff, and just congratulate him on his being elected to the governor of Maine." But the individuals were riding me because they didn't want to believe my stories, you know. So I said, "Look, I'll write the letter and I'll hand you the letter, we'll have the girl typewrite the letter, and you mail it." So, okay, well I gave it to the individual and, and his name was Muldoon. I'll never forget his name, Robin Muldoon, and he was the kidder that would needle me all the time. So he mailed the letter and three or four weeks later I received a letter and he was reminiscing of the old trip from the South Station to the caboose and all that stuff. And then, well I didn't open the letter. I came to work and I says, "Here it is Muldoon," I says, "Here's the letter from Ed." And he opened it up and read it and he was amazed. Anyhow, I thought I'd give you a little background history on that aspect. I'm straying off again, okay.

**GB:** Well, no, no, this is all good actually. A ways back you had said you were kind of surprised to see that Ed Muskie had been elected governor of Maine. Was it just an experience that someone you knew had been elected or was there some reason?

**FM:** Yeah, but I would read in the paper, local paper, on these one paragraph deals that he was a state representative for a while I think. And then all of a sudden he is the governor of Maine, and in the meantime I did not write to him and so forth and so on because we had our families. We had our own problems and so forth and so on. But, when I spotted that in the *Boston Post* I remember, Edmund S. Muskie Democratic governor of Maine. And that state in that era was Republican, it was a Republican state and he was a Democrat and here he is state governor. Then he ran for senator after, I don't know, four years or whatever, and stayed senator for two or three terms. I think it was two terms or one and a half terms, I forgot what it was.

But I would write him and congratulate him and receive the feedback from him and so forth and so on. If you're up in Maine drop in and see me and so forth. I never did, I never did. But that's about it I think on that end. But anything else, pose the questions and I'll try to answer. Some of these questions are hard to answer because I'm going back many moons.

**GB:** Of course, of course.

**FM:** Many, many moons ago.

**GB:** Well, whatever you can tell me, whatever you can remember. Had he been, from what you remember had he been interested in politics earlier on? Did you have a sense that when he got out of the service maybe he'd go into politics?

**FM:** Well, I had an idea that he was astute in that area and sooner or later he would get into politics, because he was savvy and he liked that sort of appeal and so forth, being in that environment. In fact I was a little surprised that he was the state senator. Well, first of all he was state governor and then he ran for senator and became state senator. But his downfall was, well I say his downfall, there was a cutie there up in New Hampshire by the name of Loeb I think his name, L-O-E-B.

**GB:** Yeah, William Loeb, yeah.

**FM:** Loeb, and he was running at that time for the president, presidency of the United States. But it was in the winter time, it was snowing out, and he was attacking his wife so Ed took out his handkerchief because it was snowing out and he wiped his nose. So this Loeb made a big, big remark that here he is, he's crying about the remarks that I made about his wife. You probably heard this a thousand times and so forth and so on.

**GB:** Well, we like to get everybody's take on it. What was your take when you saw that, how did you react to that?

**FM:** Well I says, it's a damn lie because I knew Ed and, you know, I'm going to stick up for his rights and all that stuff. But he was panned by Loeb, L-O-E-B, and he was the owner of the Manchester whatever the name of the newspaper, I forgot the name of the newspaper. But from there on in he sliced him down, that he was a cry baby and all that stuff and so forth and so on like all editors usually do to slice individuals down to size if possible.

But Ed was very knowledgeable in a lot of areas. Now here he is a lawyer and he ended up as an engineering officer for a while, you know, and so forth and so on. But he was very astute and very sharp in a lot of ways. And he was well thought of by all the individuals that were in the class that knew him.

**GB:** Wow. Did people generally like him personally, was he very popular or was he just respected?

**FM:** Both, he was respected and he was popular because he was likeable. He was down to earth with people, you know. He was one of the boys in the crowd and all that stuff. In fact I was really surprised that he was running for, you know, state senator and all that stuff because in that era, well we had other problems at home of survival and finding jobs and so forth because jobs weren't plentiful the way they are today. You know, because they didn't have the material

in that era after WWII when to find a job was tough and a lot of luck. Even to find a flat, you know, just a rental flat, because they didn't construct any house for four or five odd years, you know, because they didn't have the material and so forth. Even to find a flat it's who you knew and a lot of luck.

Today all you, all you need is money today. And flats are available at eighteen hundred dollars a month or three thousand a month or whatever they can get out of you and so forth and so on. But anyhow, that's the way it is, or was. But the good old times, I tell the youngsters. I had four youngsters and I said, "The good old times are right now," I said, "believe me." There's jobs all you want, you know, you go to the supermarket, eight dollars an hour to work and all this stuff, and that era after WWII they didn't have that at all. Even your meat was rationed and, you know, and I think butter was rationed for a while, and even gasoline was rationed for the longest time. If you're a defense worker you got a little more gas depending on the mileage that you traveled to work, from home to work. But for the average individual that had a non defense job, all you got is probably two or three gallons of gasoline a week for your car, if you had a car. But I don't know if you're aware of this, you've probably heard the story a thousand times.

**GB:** I haven't actually.

**FM:** Oh you haven't.

**GB:** I haven't heard all of this.

**FM:** Is that right? Well anyhow, that's it, there was lean times and you're categorized 1A if you're available for the draft, or 1B a defense worker, but, or 2C. If you're married I think the category was, you're classified into two categories, and three if you're disabled or whatever it was. But I was always 1A, 1A, and 1A and I said, oh what the hell, sooner or later they're going to get me anyhow. In fact I was working as a defense worker, and General Electric in Lynn, Massachusetts super charges that they had or used for planes, for airplanes, and later on there was the jet engines and so forth. But I was 1A all the time, it was a matter of time before I got in, so I joined to save democracy, period.

**GB:** Now this rationing you were talking about, was that before or after the war that you were referring to?

**FM:** Both.

**GB:** Both, okay, so it hadn't changed much.

**FM:** They were rationing, oh yeah, yeah, it was even after the war that you had rationing, too, I remember. On gasoline, on, I think butter also was rationed for a while, butter, and meat was rationed. I'm trying to remember way back in the dark ages in the forties now. Meat was rationed to maybe a pound a week or whatever it was.

*(telephone interruption)*

*End of Side A*

*Side B*

**FM:** Now where were we here?

**GB:** All right, well we were talking about the economic conditions back in the forties and actually I'd like to hear whatever you can remember. Whatever you can tell me about back before that because you were, just to give us, you know, an idea of the times and the circumstances that we're talking about. You were going to high school and college during the Depression, right, in the thirties?

**FM:** Okay, yeah, I got out in 1936 at Everett High, and I was fortunate where I was a runner. I was state class 440 and 600 yard record holder and champion. Well, there's a few of the stuff up there if you want to look at them, and the *Boston Globe*. And I ran in the nationals, I was runner up in the nationals at Madison Square Garden. I should have won it but I couldn't recuperate, look over here and you can see it, here we are. Well I had very low recuperative powers, see this is it here at the Boston Garden and so forth and so on. And here we are over here when I was in high school, it's the same here, too, and so forth and so on. And here we are here and all at high school and even at college. But, here we are here, and then over here, here we are when I was at Northeastern University here. And this is at the Boston Garden over here, this is little old me. A lot of hair. And over here this is at the U.S. Naval Academy here where Ed and I were at that time. But anyhow, I'm straying off again.

**GB:** Well that helped you, that helped you get a good deal for college, being a runner.

**FM:** Well that was the only reason I went to college is because I was an athlete because my father was working at GE, I was the oldest of four in the family. And in that era they were not working a full week at GE in Everett, at General Electric in Everett, so he would probably work a day or two a week. And in fact one week I think he worked an hour at GE, brought home I think less than a dollar that week he told me. But it was lean times. When I got out of high school in 1936 and I rolled in to Boston, I didn't have twenty cents carfare.

I'm giving you the sad stories here, I didn't have twenty cents carfare and I'd walk to a light and I'd wait for a truck to go in to Boston on the back end of the truck, and I'd hop on the truck and, at the lights. Because in that era trucks were open in the back so, today because they're all closed and all that stuff, it was just another era altogether. But I would get off at North Station and I'd look around for a job and I finally found a job at the Buck Printing Company. It was right across the street from South Station, and I was making thirty cents an hour. Twelve dollars a week of which I gave my father and my mother eight dollars a week for room and board, eight dollars a week. That left me four dollars. I, well actually it was three because the carfare and all that stuff, so it left me a whooping three bucks. I had a variety of offers because of my running abilities and I wanted engineering, so I says, "I think I'm going to go to Northeastern." So the track coach up at Northeastern called me up because they're all after me and I says, "Yeah, I want to go to Northeastern University." And this is going back in 1936. So I told my mother, I said, "Mum," I says, "I'm going to go to school at Northeastern University." And you know what she told me, in that era?



**GB:** What did she tell you?

**FM:** “Well what do you want to go to school for, you’re working.” That’s the advice I got from my mother. But, you know, in those lean times, I’m not begrudging that. I told her, I said “Look, Mum,” I says, “don’t worry about the tuition, it’s my responsibility,” I says. And I went to Northeastern five years, they didn’t pay a red cent, not a red cent. No allowances. And in that era they had NYA, National Youth Administration where you could work in school for forty hours a month at forty cents an hour, sixteen dollars a month, so that was my carfare at that time and spending money and whatever else. And I couldn’t go out with the men at all, or with the boys or with the girls, I was like a hermit because it was lean times. Well anyhow, that’s the background history there, now, I don’t know if you want to, if you want me to continue this story or not.

**GB:** Yeah, yeah, go ahead, go ahead, go ahead if you’ve got more.

**FM:** But these were lean years. But, well I got out of school there and then I went to work at GE and all that stuff and, well it was war years also. This is going back in 1941, I got out in 1941 and we were in war then. But I found work at GE in Lynn, Massachusetts on turbo super charger research and development, so I worked there. But, you know, they’re after me and the draft always 1A, 1A, it’s a matter of time before they’re going to get me, 1A means you’re eligible, you’ve got your health and all that stuff and you’re ready to go any time. So I said to myself, well sooner or later I’ll be in the draft, I might as well start. So I went up to North Station here and they had a Naval office there and I went up there, had an interview and all that stuff, and a physical exam up there and all that stuff, and then I went to Annapolis and so forth and so on. But anyhow, that’s a lot of background history.

**GB:** Now, I think I missed, I see Newton up there, did you grow up in Newton, Massachusetts?

**FM:** No, I grew up in Everett, Everett, Massachusetts.

**GB:** Everett, Massachusetts, all right.

**FM:** Everett, Massachusetts is just over the line here, probably about four or five miles down. But I ran in Newton, Mass and all that stuff. In fact we were familiar with Newton, with Brookline, and all the other areas and so forth.

**GB:** Now when we first came down here you had been telling me about a trip to Lewiston that you had taken, you know, for some track events. Do you remember anything else about Lewiston-Auburn, the area, when you visited?

**FM:** Okay, Lewiston. I remember that, the first time we arrived in Lewiston I remember we took a bus from Boston, from Northeastern, and it was a long trip up to Lewiston, all the way up there. They didn’t have super highways the way they do today, and we went Route 1, the back road and all that stuff. And we arrived there probably three or four in the afternoon. We stayed at the hotel I remember there, there was an old hotel, I vaguely remember that. I’m going back

in 1938, 1938, wow, that's many years ago. We stayed at the hotel and the following morning we went into the Cage and they had a cage, dirt I remember. I don't know what they have up there today at Bates, I don't know if it's cage dirt or so, the indoor track I'm talking about. An indoor track because this was January, this was January.

And I remember that I ran there in the sprint and I, I wasn't a sprinter but I ran all the sprints and I won the 45 yard sprint and also the 600 and smashed the record of Arnold Adams I think his name was. But he was on the Olympic team in 1936, on the one-mile relay team, Arnold Adams I think it was. But I smashed his record. And then the following years I ran there but, you know, that wasn't for the record. It's for the points for the team primarily so, you know, you're in a 300 and a 600 or a 600 and a sprint probably and the relay maybe, so so forth and so on. And you had to conserve to save energy for the other events, is what I'm saying.

**GB:** Did you see much of the city when you were up there?

**FM:** Very, very little because we arrived, I remember we arrived there it was late afternoon. And in the winter time well the days are short, you know, about five o'clock it's midnight. But I remember they had the cars, the railway cars, the electrical cars just around the square and around the block. I don't know if it's there today or not, I don't think so probably.

**GB:** No, it's not.

**FM:** That's long gone, I'm going to the dark ages. But I remember that distinctly. Very, very quaint town I remember in that era. I remember the gym was cage track dirt, I remember, on the periphery of it. And they had baseball practice, they had the nets up in the middle of it. I don't know if it's still there or not.

**GB:** Well they have actually, yeah, they have some new facilities, new athletic facilities and they got a, I'm not sure when it was built but they got now an indoor asphalt track.

**FM:** Oh, asphalt.

**GB:** Yeah, and it's in the same building.

**FM:** It was cage dirt at that time, it was cage dirt. Asphalt is much faster, yeah.

**GB:** They had asphalt and, yeah, they have a couple new athletic facilities, one that was built just a couple years ago so that's what is there now. All right, so I'm going to jump around a little bit now.

**FM:** Sure, jump around all you want.

**GB:** You mentioned your short correspondence with Muskie right when he was elected governor. Did you keep in touch with him at all after that, did you write back and forth at all, or?

**FM:** Well how I wrote to is, when I went to work at Watertown National Laboratories. I told the individual, I says, "My roommate is elected, was elected the governor of Maine." "Oh, come on, Frank," they said, you know, they didn't want to believe me. I said, "Look, I'll write the letter and-," I told you this before, and put it in the mail and so forth and so on. But after that I would congratulate him on being elected the senator of Maine and all that stuff and I'd receive a letter from him, if you're around these parts please drop in and all that stuff. And he was well known throughout, you know, Washington, I'm sure because he was astute. He was a sharp individual and so forth and so on. But I didn't see him at all, personally I'm talking about, I didn't see him after that.

But, in fact when he passed away I don't know if I, I believe I wrote his wife a note of, you know, condolences and so forth and so on. But, he met her I think, she was working in a five and ten cent store or Kresge's or something like that, and he met her there probably I think. And then sooner or later the relationship was there and he married her. But she was a down to earth person. I didn't know her is what I'm saying. I'm just reminiscing of some of the stories that I heard from the papers and so forth and so forth. But, I don't know if she's alive or not.

**GB:** She is, she is.

**FM:** Well I know that he had a son by the same name and he's a photographer or something. Same name and I think he works for the *Yankee* magazine, it's one of those magazines.

**GB:** Actually, I don't think uh, I don't think it's, it's Ed, Jr. who does that, I think that's his other son. He has a, oh boy, now I'm getting mixed up. Because Ed, Jr. I believe works in Washington, in some type of agency in Washington. I could be a little bit mixed up, I could be mixing something up, but yeah.

**FM:** Oh no, that's all right, that's all right. But I remember, but he was a photographer. Now I don't know if he was the oldest son or not. In fact I ran across his name here maybe about a year ago and I said to wife, my goodness gracious, there's Ed Muskie's son right here. But I don't know if he was a senior editor at that time or something, but it's like everything else, time marches on.

**GB:** All right, well you must have been excited to see this, I mean it must have been exciting to see that he was elected governor of Maine and you must have been even more excited I'd imagine when you saw he was running for president. What did you think of that, when you first heard that, you know, he was -?

**FM:** Well, it's like everything else, being an average individual and so forth, sure I was excited like everybody else. But his downfall as we said before was Loeb here, and I don't want to, you know, to to, you know, reiterate that again and so forth and so on. But, well he was well versed in politics because sooner or later if you're in that environment, you know, a lot of that rubs off fast and you know the way the ball game is played. And he was astute and he was a lawyer and all that stuff. But, in fact after WWII when he became a civilian I think he practiced law for about a year or two. I don't know if it was in Rumford, Maine or -

**GB:** It was in Waterville.

**FM:** Oh, Waterville, what's this, yeah, I said Rumford. Waterville, Maine for about a year or two or whatever it was. But he was, you know, knowledgeable, well liked, well versed in a lot of areas and subjects. But it's like everything else, time marches on.

**GB:** All right, well I have a few more questions for you.

**FM:** Yeah, you can throw all the questions at me. I'll try to answer them but I'm going back many, many moons ago (*unintelligible word*).

**GB:** Of course. Did you keep in touch with any other friends you had who were at Penn State with you and Muskie?

**FM:** No, I didn't to be honest with you. But I have all their names and where they went to school. And in the photographs, in the photographs, I don't know where the hell I put that, it was a sign or something. There it is it's over that picture, I think it's upstairs probably. I put it out of the way here and forget where the hell I put it. But here I have all the (*tape fast forwards - misses some text*). I don't know if she's even alive right now.

**GB:** She is, she is actually. In fact, you know, she was quite a bit younger than Muskie was and, yup, she's living in Maryland.

**FM:** Maryland?

**GB:** Yeah, because they lived in D.C. for a while and she stayed right around Maryland. And we've had one or two interviews, one, one interview with her so far in the project, yeah. And, all right, just one or two more questions.

**FM:** You can ask as many as you want, if I can answer them I'll gladly answer them.

**GB:** I have the names in a note, Kramer and Ted Shroeder. Who were they?

**FM:** Ted Shroeder, he went to Annapolis with us and he was a tremendous tennis player. He was on the Davis Cup team that, I don't know if they went to Australia or not, but he was in our class at the U.S. Naval Academy. I remember, Ted, and he performed an exhibition, a tennis exhibition I remember and he was tremendous. But, well, on the Davis Cup team it's the best of the best is what I'm saying. This is going back in 1942 or '3 I think, '42 or '3, '42. And after WWII I think he also played tennis.

In fact, he had a son who was a tremendous golfer, Ted Shroeder, Jr., and he was on the pro golf tour for a while. His son, I know, the oldest son, Ted Shroeder, Jr., tremendous golfer. He was announcing one of the tournaments, this is going back about three or four odd years ago, and I said my goodness gracious, that's Shroeder's son, a tremendous golfer. But I remember old Ted. In fact he couldn't march worth a hell so to speak, always out of cadence, but he could play tennis. Ted Shroeder. But how did you find out that he was in our class at the U.S. Naval

Academy, did I tell you that or -?

**GB:** I'm not sure, you may have told Andrea and I just had a note about it that it might be something to ask about.

**FM:** Ted Shroeder, yeah, he as on the Davis Cup team I think after WWII. I think the year after he got out of the Navy or the year he went in the Navy, one of the two but he was on the team anyhow. Ted.

**GB:** Sure, all right. Well finally I guess, do you have any more stories from your time at Penn State having to do with Ed Muskie or just that would illustrate your experience, or from any time that you were in the military, anything that would illustrate the experience of being in WWII or in training for WWII?

**FM:** Where he was involved, you're talking about.

**GB:** Where he was involved preferably, or just anything that was particularly interesting from your involvement in the service just to give us a kind of a look at the history of it.

**FM:** I'm trying to remember without any more duplications and so forth. But, I don't know, if you pose any questions I'll try to answer them but -

**GB:** Yeah. Nothing's coming to mind directly.

**FM:** Nothing is rolling in the old brain, the brain power is numb. No, no, I can't help you at the moment.

**GB:** Sure, sure, well I'm, I'm just about done with my questions here so do you have any final remarks you'd like to make, anything you'd like to add that we haven't covered or just anything we've already covered that you'd like to emphasize?

**FM:** Well, I don't want to be repetitive here, on a lot of these remarks that I've been just making earlier about our train rides to State College P.A. But I remember Ed, he was one of the tallest individuals in our regiment so to speak. And I'm trying to think, to see if I have any photographs of us being in the service together at the U.S. Naval Academy but it, no, I don't think so, nothing at all.

**GB:** Now just how tall was he? I hear people talking about how, that's the first thing everyone says about him, well, he was a real tall guy. Do you remember how-?

**FM:** Well he was tall. Well, in the photographs here that, you were saying, he's always a head over everybody. And he was always in the background because in front he would be yay high and all the others would be midgets, so he'd be always in the background. But he was well versed in a lot of subjects, actually, especially politics. He loved it I remember and sooner or later he was in it more and more naturally when he got out of the service.

**GB:** Did you guys talk about politics together?

**FM:** At that era, well it was war years and he was fairly young at that time and, you know, with time and with the individuals that were friends with him, depending on who was pushing him. See, he lived in Maine. I lived here and he had friends up there and sooner or later they're in that area or that category and they nurtured him along, I'm sure. And they gave him a lot of hints of how to become astute in the world of politics because it's a, you know, it's one of these things that, no holds barred usually as you probably know and will probably hear this week.

**GB:** Oh, I'm sure, I'm sure.

**FM:** But, let's see, I'm going back many years and all these little incidences is usually forgotten or you're going to sleep at night and then you wake up and you're, oh gee, I remember that, you know, it comes back to you, but, it's a sign of aging. But I remember when, no, I can't help you any more that way. But he was a sharp individual, he was likeable, everybody liked Ed. He was down to earth at that time and he didn't put on the dog at all, you know, he was just natural and that was it. But, I don't know how many youngsters he had, he had three or four was it.

**GB:** I want to say, I want to tell you four. I want to say four.

**FM:** I think it was four, yeah, but I think it was four, too. But he got married later on in life because he was about four years older than me and so, and then he got married after he got out of the service so when he got married he was probably in the low thirties maybe.

**GB:** He was, he was in his early thirties and she was just around, just around twenty or so.

**FM:** Yeah, yeah, and he just met her in a department store I think. I vaguely remember reading about that. But I didn't know her at all. But old Ed, very sharp individual, sharp, sharp, very sharp. Well that's about it that I have, I don't know what else to expound on.

**GB:** Well that's actually a good place to stop, that's a good place to stop. Well -

**FM:** Well I gave you the photographs and gave you a lot of addresses. A lot of the individuals I don't know if they're alive or not because I haven't contacted any of them that were there on those photographs at all.

**GB:** Well, it's a good place to start.

**FM:** But you can start there and there'll be a lot of letters that will be coming back to you probably that they're dead or they moved or we don't know or whatever. But I have the names there for you so if you want to look in the area at City Hall or whatever, but where they live I'm talking about.

**GB:** Yeah, and try to figure it out from there.

**FM:** Figure it out from there. But, see, at the U.S. Naval Academy we were categorized by your last name, A-B-C-D-E-F-G and I'm an M and he's an M. But he was M-U and I'm an M-A, Mascianica, so we were in that area, see. But at, out to Penn State it's a grab bag, you know. If you knew the individual, okay, you want to be my roommate, yup, okay, and that was it. But at Annapolis altogether it was by your last name in alphabetical order.

**GB:** All right.

**FM:** If there's anything else I'll try to help you but I'm straying off and -

**GB:** Well, I'm fresh out of questions so I guess we'll stop right there so, -

**FM:** I don't know if I helped you or hindered you.

**GB:** Oh absolutely, absolutely.

*End of Interview.*